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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2005

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Available at: www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home*

CHICO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JASON MORGAN, 27, of Chico, California, pleaded guilty today to charges he produced, received, distributed and possessed child pornography in August and September, 2003. The guilty pleas were entered before United States District Court Judge William B. Shubb.

This case is the product of an extensive/joint investigation by the Sacramento-based SAFE Task Force which is comprised of law enforcement agents from the California Department of Justice's Sexual Predator Apprehension Team and the Sacramento Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Laurel D. White, who is prosecuting the case, MORGAN pleaded guilty to two counts of receiving child pornography, on August 24th and 25th, 2003; two counts of distributing child pornography on August 30th and September 1st, 2003; and one count of possessing child pornography between August 24th and September 5, 2003. MORGAN also pleaded guilty to charges he used a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of that minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

According to court documents, agents began to investigate MORGAN in March of 2003

when he contacted an undercover officer and expressed an interest in having sex with the undercover officer's fictitious children. After repeated conversations, MORGAN arranged to meet the undercover officer and his fictitious daughter at a Chico motel for the purpose of engaging in sex with the child. The meeting never took place, however, because MORGAN suspected they were police. Thereafter, federal authorities received permission from the district court to electronically intercept and monitor MORGAN's internet account. During the monitoring period, agents discovered that MORGAN actively traded child pornography. They also learned that he had established a relationship with a 14-year old girl in Minnesota and that he persuaded her to take sexually explicit images of herself and then email them to MORGAN. Agents who analyzed MORGAN's computer after his arrest found approximately 1,160 images of child pornography that MORGAN had saved to his computer hard drive. Among the images were sexually explicit images the 14-year old Minnesota girl had sent to MORGAN at his direction. MORGAN faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and maximum sentence of 30 years on the child pornography production charge. The receipt and distribution charges carry a mandatory minimum 5 years to maximum 20 year sentence of imprisonment. The possession of child pornography charge carries a maximum 10-year term of imprisonment. MORGAN also faces a \$250,000 fine for each count of conviction, and a possible life term of supervised release. Sentencing is scheduled for May 11, 2005.

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